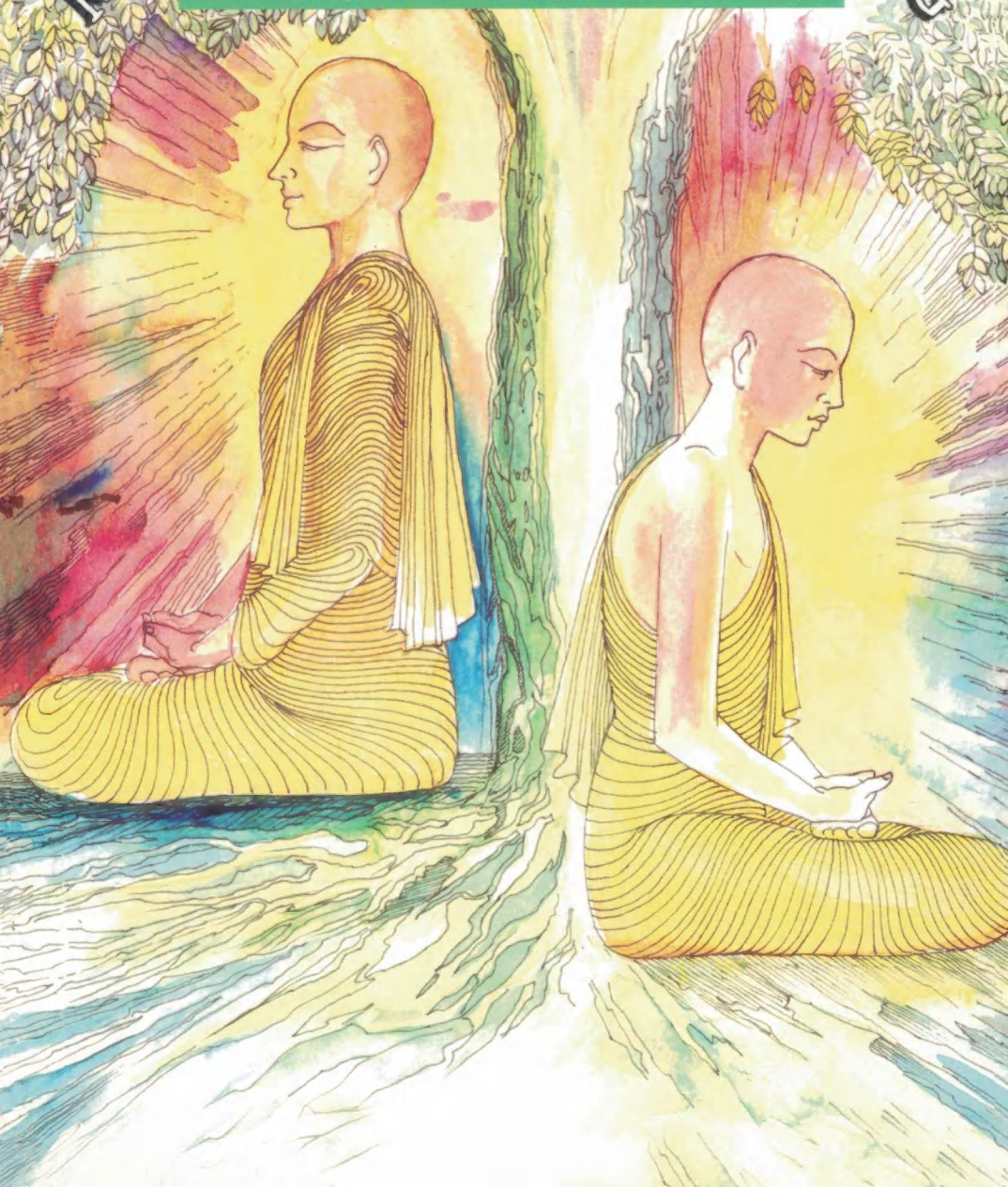


MEDITATION ON BREATHING

Ven. Balangoda Anandamaitreya Maha Thera



MEDITATION ON BREATHING

ĀNAPĀNA-SATI

*Development of Mindfulness
as Expounded by the Buddha*

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“Mātā pitū upaṭṭhanam”

Among the greatest Blessings, advocated by the
Supremely Enlightened One, to Human beings,
Gods and Brahmas is the virtue of caring and
supporting their parents.

Honoring this exalted advice of The Supreme Buddha,
the present book,

“MEDITATION ON BREATHING”

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to confer the highest blessing on their mother,
Madam. Ng Siew Eng on her Eightieth Birthday
on 8th Lunar month, 3rd day 1998.

May she and her family be
happy, healthy and prosperous by the Blessings of
The Triple Gem”.

Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero

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MEDITATION ON BREATHING

There are two kinds of meditation, namely, the one that leads to full concentration, stillness, peace and ease of mind, and the other that leads to Realization or Enlightenment and thereby to perfect peace of mind. Out of these two, the one that leads to full concentration consists of forty methods that lead to higher stages of concentration. Out of these forty methods, I shall deal here with the method of concentrating on one's breath.

A person who expects to achieve success in his spiritual development must, first of all, be of morally good character. At least he must develop the five precepts (**panca - sīla**):

1. He must refrain from hurting and taking life;
2. He must refrain from possessing others' things illegally;
3. He must refrain from sexual misconduct;
4. He must refrain from wrong speech,*
6. He must refrain from taking intoxicants.

In addition to keeping these five precepts, he must refrain from the wrong means of earning his livelihood. If he expects to attain to higher states of concentration, he should have sense-control and lead a pure, celibate life. The person who expects to practise the meditation on breathing should find a suitable place for his practice. It

*The four types of wrong speech are: falsehood, slandering, harsh speech, and idle gossip.

must be free of any inconvenience, secluded, with no disturbances whatever. Meditators of olden days used to spend their time mostly in forests or remote areas of groves, in an isolated shelter under a shady tree, or in an empty house, and there they practised their particular systems of meditation. In a society which is noisy and full of disturbances, it is impossible to carry out such practices in the daytime. But at night, after all have gone to bed, when silence reigns, it is not difficult, I believe, to practise any kind of meditation.

One may choose any posture that is convenient and comfortable, but at the start, it is much better if one is able to sit with legs crosswise or to sit on a chair with one's upper body erect, with one's vertebrae resting end to end.

The First Stage of Practice

At the start of practice, the meditator should sit down in a comfortable way and make a strong resolution to carry out his practice for his spiritual development. Then he may dedicate himself to his spiritual teacher. At this point he is ready to start his practice.

He may watch his inhalation and exhalation at the start. By no means should he force breath in or out. He should just be aware of his breath as it passes in and out while letting the breath go in and out automatically in its own way. He has only to be watchful, mindful and attentive to it. If he is a long-nosed person, the breath will touch the tip of his

nose first, and if his nose is a short one, the breath will touch his upper lip first. He should fix his mind and attention on the spot the breath first touches, the tip of the nose or the upper lip, as the case may be. He should carry out this practice at least twice a day for one full hour each time. As for meditators who have devoted their whole life to such practices, they may practise for the whole day, except when they attend to their bodies' needs.

To be conscious and mindful of, or attentive to, one's breath is the preliminary step of this practice. If the meditator has not yet fully developed concentration, his mind might wander at times towards some experience in the past or some design for the future. In order to avoid this lapse in concentration, the meditator should start counting either at inhalation or exhalation according to his wish.

* When breath touches the tip of his nose or his upper lip, he should mentally count **one**. Until the next breath touches the spot, he should mentally count **one, one, one**, on and on.

* When the next breath touches the spot, he should count **two, two, two**, on and on. He should continue counting in this way until he comes to the **fifth** breath.

* When he counts **five**, he has completed the first round and he should begin the second round with counting **one** and go forward as in the first round, but up to the number **six** in this second round.

* After completing the second round, he should begin the third round with counting the number **one** again and should go forward until he comes to the number **seven**.

* Then he should begin the fourth round with counting

one and go forward till he reaches the number **eight**. He should then begin the fifth round with counting **one** and should go on till the number **nine**.

* Leaving no gap, he should start from **one** again and proceed until the counting of **ten**. He should not count beyond **ten**.

Now, taking all these five rounds as one set, he should repeat the process as given in the first set for at least one hour. When he follows this method, he will be able to control his mind and to prevent it from wandering.

Note: Counting may be either slow or fast. If a meditator's attention to his breathing is weak, his counting becomes slow, and if his attention is strong, his counting becomes fast. If he is easily disturbed and turns his thoughts towards external objects, his attention is weak. If outer objects are not able to disturb him, it means that his attention to his breathing is strong.

The Second Stage

When the meditator has cut short the wandering of his mind and has been able to fix it strongly on the spot of his breath's first touch, it is no longer necessary for him to count his breaths. At this stage, he has to fix his mind on, and be watchful of, his breath and be aware of a long breath as long and a short breath as short. In this practice, while inhaling long, he should notice and be aware of it: "I inhale long." While inhaling short, he should notice and be aware of it: "I am inhaling short." While exhaling long he should

notice it, and while exhaling short he should notice that too. He must be careful not to allow any breath to pass unnoticed. He should continue this practice at a single stretch at least one full hour. When he continues this process, he will feel that his breaths become, little by little, more and more subtle and gentle.

Third Stage

Now he should train himself in experiencing the whole structure of his breath. While fixing his attention on the spot of his breath's first touch, he should try to be aware of the beginning, middle and end of his inhalation as well as of his exhalation. When he inhales, he should mentally follow the inhalation right from the spot his breath first touches until it reaches its end. When he exhales, he should follow the exhalation from the beginning until it reaches its end at the spot of its first touch (i.e., at the tip of the nose or the upper lip, as the case may be).

The beginning of inhalation is the first spot the breath touches (the tip of the nose or upper lip) and its end is the navel (as perceived by the meditator). The beginning of exhalation is at the navel, and its end is the spot of its first touch. To some meditators, only one of the three stages - the beginning, the middle or the end of the inhalation or exhalation - is clear and plain, and the other two are not clear. To some, two of them are clear and the other one is not clear. To others, all the three are clear. Until all the three stages become clear, the meditator should make a

special effort. In this practice, he should keep his attention on the spot his breath first touches (the tip of the nose or upper lip)

For example, if a man stands at the fulcrum of a see-saw or teeter-totter and repeatedly pushes the plank down first on one side and then on the other for the amusement of his children, even though he does not move from the fulcrum, he sees both the ends and the middle of the plank. In this same way, the meditator should anchor his mindfulness in the spot of the breath's first touch, but he should follow the beginning, middle and end of the inhalations and exhalations. Or suppose a man were to cut a tree trunk with a saw. His attention would be kept on the saw's teeth where they touch the tree trunk. He would not give attention to the teeth while they proceed to the trunk and recede from it, but they would not be unknown to him. Similarly, the meditator, even though he does not give attention to the inhalations and exhalations as they come and go, is aware of them. This is due to the development and expansion of his mindfulness.

The Fourth Stage

By now the meditator feels that his breath has calmed down. If he does not feel so, he should carry out the previous practice with a special effort to make his course of breath subtle, gentle and calm. After a short time, he will be successful and his breath will become calm and allayed. When he is successful in this effort, both his body and mind

will become light. They may become so light that his body may leap up into the air. Actually, the physical bodies of some meditators rise into the air four or five inches at least. I know of two persons (Buddhist monks) who, while they were practising this meditation, rose in the air until their heads touched the ceiling of the room and after a few minutes floated down to the earth.

When the meditator properly develops concentration of his mind on his breath in this manner, he will eventually perceive his own breath as a force of wind touching his nostrils or as something like cotton touching the same spot. This is called the reflection or replica of the breath (**uggaha-nimitta**, the thing learned or taken into mind from the outer object, that is, his breath).

The more the meditator fixes his mind and attention on his breath in this manner, the farther his mind goes away from the impediments (**nivāranas**) which bar its development. There are five impediments: sensuality (**Kāmacchanda**), ill-will (**vyāpada**), sluggishness and lethargy (**thinamiddha**), restlessness and worry (**uddacca-kukkucca**), and uncertainty (**vicikicchā**). After some practice, when he comes to the fourth stage of his development, the five impediments will recede still further, his mind will become still purer, and its object, the breath, will appear still brighter. To some, it appears as a cluster of stars or as one star or one gem; to some, as a cluster of gems; to others, as a cluster of pearls, as a puff of smoke, as a stretched out cobweb, as a film of cloud, as a lotus flower, as a chariot wheel, as the sun, as the moon, or as

some other bright object. This is called the counterpart object (**patibhāga-nimitta**). When a counterpart object has appeared, the meditator must be very careful not to let it disappear, for if it somehow disappears, it will be very difficult to make it reappear. It will disappear due to his carelessness. If he is proud, thinking that he has become successful and allows his thoughts to run towards any tempting object, i.e., an object which makes him lustful or angry and the like, then his mind's level which has risen to such a high point might come down to that of an ordinary, undeveloped man. To guard and protect the counterpart object, he must avoid the following things:

1. Unsuitable abodes (places where there are disturbances like frequency of visitors, noisiness and the like);
2. unsuitable resort (where there is difficulty in obtaining food and other requisites);
3. unsuitable talk (which disturbs or discourages his practice);
4. unsuitable association (which disturbs or discourages his practice);
5. unsuitable food (that is disagreeable to his taste or that is harmful to his health);
6. unsuitable posture (a posture which is not comfortable to him. The teacher of meditation

practice should not force his disciple to be in a posture, or to adapt himself to a posture, which is not comfortable to him, because it makes his practice a failure or delays his development.);

7. unsuitable climate (a cold or hot one which is disagreeable or harmful to his health).

As regards his further practice, he should repeatedly turn his mind towards the counterpart object. By doing so, his mind will be strongly fixed on the object and it will not easily disappear. Now, he should accomplish proficiency in ecstatic concentration by fulfilling the following ten conditions:

1. Keeping his body, dress and place clean;
2. Bringing about evenness of five mental faculties:
(a) confidence, (b) energy or effort, (c) mindfulness,
(d) concentration, and (e) the faculty of reasoning;
3. Cultivating skill in protecting the counterpart object;
4. Exerting his mind when it should be exerted;
5. Restraining his mind when it should be restrained;
6. Encouraging his mind when it is dejected;
7. Controlling his mind when it is exuberant;
8. Avoiding persons who have not developed concentration;
9. Associating with persons who have concentration;
10. Being resolute about the development of concentration.

The meditator who energetically follows the instructions given thus far will be able to attain to the first ecstatic

trance.* But even though he has attained to it by means of fixing his mind on the counterpart object, it is better and safer for him to extend, or make greater, the counterpart object at this point in his practice. He should now try to extend it both in length and breadth. He should first mentally delimit it. - say one inch all around, then two inches, three inches, and so forth. Thus extending its boundary successively, he should make it appear one foot wide, two feet wide, and so on, at least extending it to the size of an umbrella. If he likes, he may extend it until it becomes the size of his house, or the size of his town, or the size of infinite space. Then he will perceive the counterpart object has expanded into an infinite light. But it is not necessary to expand it to that extent. When he has expanded it to the size of an umbrella, it is quite sufficient in size for him to fix his mind firmly on it and attain to the first ecstatic trance (the first **Jhāna**).

When he comes to this concentrated state of mind, he experiences the five constituents of the first trance: applied thought (**vitakka**), sustained thought (**vicāra**), joy (**pīti**), ease(**sukha**), and one-pointedness (**ekaggatā**). These five factors of the first ecstatic consciousness make the mind's fixation on the object stronger and strongly suppress or inhibit the five impediments (**nivāranas**). Applied thought inhibits sluggishness and lethargy, sustained thought inhibits uncertainty; joy inhibits ill-will; comfort inhibits restlessness and worry; and one-pointedness inhibits

*Here what we mean by 'trance' is not a sleepy or inactive mood, but a waking state of mind, fully open and fixed on the point of concentration (a state known as **Jhāna** in Pali, and later as Chan in Chinese, and eventually as Zen in Japanese).

sensuality. The meditator who has attained to this ecstatic trance, experiences a feeling of ease and happiness, full of ecstasy and a peace never before even dreamed of by him.

The meditator who has achieved the first ecstatic trance should master it in five ways - otherwise, he will not be able to rise higher in his practice. He must master it by *referring* to it (**āvajjanā**), by *entering* it (**samapajhāna**), by *steadying* it (**adhiṭṭhāna**), by *emerging* from it (**vutṭhāna**) and by *reviewing* it (**paccavekkhana**).

To master it by *referring* to it is to turn his thoughts towards the trance at any place and at any time with no difficulty.

To master it by *entering* it is to be able to enter the trance at any place and at any moment.

To master it by *steadying* it is to remain in the trance as long as he likes.

To master it by *emerging* from it is the ability to emerge from the trance at any place and at any time.

To master it by *reviewing* it is the ability to remember and examine the nature of the trance, the nature of its factors, and the like.

When he has achieved mastery over the first trance in these five ways, he will be successful in attaining to the next higher one, the second ecstatic trance (second **Jhāna**).

After the meditator has mastered the first trance, he sees

applied (**vitakka**) and sustained thought (**vicāra**) as gross states of mind, and he feels it would be better if he could enter the trance without them. So he enters the first trance thousands and thousands of times and masters it in the five ways mentioned above. Thus being more and more familiar with and closer to the counterpart object, he will finally be able to enter the trance without the applied and sustained thoughts (**vitakka and vicāra**) and will attain to the second trance (**jhana**), experiencing its three constituents, joy (**pīti**), comfort or ease (**sukha**) and one-pointedness (**ekaggatā**). He must master this second ecstatic trance, too, in the same five ways. He then perceives joy (**pīti**), too, as a gross state of mind. After entering the second trance incessantly, he will be able to attain to the third trance which is without joy, but is accompanied by comfort or ease (**sukha**) and one-pointedness (**ekaggatā**). He must master this trance, too, in the same five ways. When he reviews the third trance and sees ease (a pleasurable feeling) as a gross quality close to the sense - pleasures, he tries to be rid of it, too. After mastering the third trance in the same five ways, comfort (a pleasant feeling) will turn into equanimity (an indifferent feeling). Then he will attain to the fourth trance, experiencing equanimity and one-pointedness. This, too, he must master in the same five ways.

After this, if he wants to develop psychic powers such as levitation, clairvoyance, clairaudience, thought- reading, thought transference, remembering past lives and the like, he may develop them. But he must be cautious not to be tempted by and attached to them, for attachment to such

powers will be an obstacle to his further spiritual development.

When the meditator reviews and examines the nature of the fourth trance and its factors, he will see many of its faults. It is still near the gross sensual states. He will see that the life after his death will be one in which he will possess a subtle material body, a body that, even though subtle, will be subject to death and decay. Seeing so many defects in the fourth trance, he will strive to attain to a state entirely rid of any materiality.

Trances Dealing With The Mental Plane

Now the meditator extends and expands the counter- part object (the light) infinitely in conceptualized space. After he sees mentally that the light has spread everywhere in the conceptualized space, he should fix his mind therein and remain for a short time. Then he should emerge from that state and remember what he has seen in the trance. When he sees it clearly, he should will and determine that the same light disappear. After some effort, he will be able to make it disappear and to see the empty conceptualized space. This is not a reality, it is a concept. He should fix his mind firmly on this conceptualized infinite space, which he will be able to do after some effort. This stage of mind's concentration is an ecstatic trance in which the mind is fixed on the infinite conceptualized space (**akasānañ - cāyatana -samādhi**). It is the first trance of the Pure Mental Plane. He must master this trance in the same five ways that he has mastered the other trances. After some

experience with this trance, he will feel this one is still near the material states of life, and he will make the effort to attain to a still finer state of mind. He will enter the trance and get up from it and remember all its nature, trying to handle the state of mind he had at the previous moment. After some effort, he will be able to handle the consciousness he had in the previous ecstatic trance.

After some effort, he will be able to fix his present consciousness on that previous consciousness. Then he will be fixing his mind on a very subtle concept. Thus in this stage, his mind will become much finer than before. This type of concentrated state of mind is called **“the state of infinite consciousness”** (*viññānan-cāyatana-samādhi*). This is the second trance of the Pure Mental Plane. He must master this trance, too, in the same five ways. After he masters it and experiences it over and over again, he will become familiar with this experience and be unsatisfied with it, and he will enter the trance, experience and be unsatisfied with it, and he will have a desire to make his mind and its object still finer. So, he will enter the trance, experience its bliss thoroughly, wake up and turn his attention towards the nature of the absence of consciousness of infinite space at the present moment. Though in the beginning it will be somewhat difficult to handle, after making some effort, he will be successful and be able to fix his mind on the nature of the absence of infinite space. Then he will enter the third trance in which his mind is fixed on the nature of the absence of the consciousness of infinite space. This is called **“the trance of nothingness”** (i.e., in which the mind is fixed on the

absence of consciousness of infinite space). He will master this trance, too, in the five ways of mastery. After that, he will enter the same trance, emerge after a short time and look back and remember the nature of his mind in this third trance and see it as very fine. Then he will fix his present consciousness (mind) in the previous trance (ecstatic) consciousness and experience its calmness and bliss. At this stage he will feel this to be the highest and finest state of mind. He will feel that it is neither conscious nor unconscious (**neva-sañña-nāsaññā**).

Some persons mistake this state for the eternal bliss of **Nibbana**. Those persons who have developed concentration up to these four last successive trances (i.e., trance of infinite space, trance of infinite consciousness, trance of the absence of the previous consciousness, and trance of neither conscious nor unconscious state) will remain, after they leave their gross physical body, in a pure mental (or spiritual) state for cycles of time.

Though some meditators attain to these states, they are still in the world, because after they enjoy the bliss of the peace of those states (when the force they have accumulated by their practice is spent), they return to the human world. If they want to go back to that same mental plane, they must carry out the practice once more from the beginning. Our Bodhisatta (Buddha before His Enlightenment), the ascetic **Siddhartha Gautama**, developed concentration until he attained to the trance of neither-conscious-nor-unconscious state. He examined it and found its peace would last only for a limited period of time, that it was not

eternal. So he gave it up, went on his own way and discovered the path of **vipassanā**, treading which, he attained to full realization. This latter system is called **ānāpāna-vipassanā**.

Ānāpāna - Vipassanā

Vipassanā may be practised in two ways: One way depends on the ecstatic trance and other way does not. First, the way to practice **vipassanā** depending on the ecstatic trance will be explained.

The meditator enters any one of the four ecstatic trances and emerges from it after a short time. Then he reviews the nature of the trance-consciousness, its constituents and the object upon which they depend, which he valued so long and attained to with much difficulty. He thus realizes that all those are impermanent, unsatisfactory and lacking in entity. He goes further on, examining his breath, the spot of the breath's first touch, the nature of his physical body which supports the breath, feelings that arise when breaths touch the "spot of their first touch," consciousness that arises together with the feeling, and how they are conditioned. When he goes on carrying out this inward search, clearer and clearer he will perceive that all those states, both mental and physical, are conditioned, phenomenal, transient, restless, unsatisfactory and insubstantial. Thus perceiving unsteadiness, unsatisfactoriness and egolessness of his mind-body process, he clears himself of error, achieving purity of views (**diṭṭhi -visuddhi**). At this stage, he sees no particular

thing called breath, but an ever changing flow of very minute units of matter composed of four primary qualities: hardness or softness, cohesion, temperature, and vibration, indivisibly united.

Now the meditator further examines how these material and mental states arise, goes on in search of their causes and finds the law of causal genesis (**paticca - samuppāda**). He understands that the continuity of material and mental states which he has mistaken so long for "I" has been caused and conditioned by attachment or craving (**tanhā**) for such an existence, and that attachment or craving has been caused and conditioned by nascence or ignorance as to the nature of such as existence. He sees that the past ignorance, craving and volitional formations conditioned by the same two, have brought up the present phenomenal existence and that the same causes and conditions, if not rooted out, will build future phenomenal existence. When he examines thus keenly, he sees clearer and in detail this law of causal genesis and clears his uncertainty as to the nature of his own existence, and by inference that of other living beings.

He sees more clearly than before the three **signata*** in this whole existence (this is called **kankhā-vitarana-visuddhi**). Because of this knowledge and purity of heart, he feels extremely joyful, which influences his blood and causes an aura to emanate from his body. At the same time, he feels extremely blissful, serene, very energetic, even-minded, more self-confident, more mindful and of sharper

*Three signata: impermenence, unsatisfactoriness and insubstantiality of things which for so long he has taken for "himself".

awareness. He feels much attached to these new gains. Some meditators mistake these new gains for “attainment to arahantship” and stop further practice. Such ones will soon fall away even from that state and remain at the former average level.

But the wise meditator discretely examines and scrutinizes his new gains and finds out that he still has not removed his attachment to worldliness. He clearly sees that those new gains are but obstacles to his further progress. He examines those new gains and perceives their transiency, unsatisfactoriness and insubstantiality. He comes to know that the only way he has to take is to discern even more clearly the nature of his psychophysical process. This attainment of understanding is called “the purity achieved by discrimination between right and wrong ways” (**maggāmagga - ñāna-dassana -visuddhi**).

Now he goes forward examining the material side as well as the mental side of his life and sees still more clearly the instantaneous rise and fall of the mental and material states of his life. This clear perception is called “the knowledge of the rise and fall of states” (**Udaya -vyaya-ñāna**).

When he examines and analyzes more and more deeply the ephemeral nature of his mental and physical states, their constant fall and breakdown become dreadfully clear. Understanding of this nature is called “the knowledge of the fall” (**Bhanga ñāna**).

When he sees the constant fall of the constituents of his

so called self, he sees it to be a terror. This is called “ the knowledge of the nature of terror in the so-called self”(Bhaya -ñāna).

When he sees the terror-nature of the constituents of his mind-matter process, he sees all this process as a danger. This is called the “knowledge of danger” (Ādīnava -ñāna) When he watches and meditates over this dangerous nature of his psycho-physical existence, he takes a strong dislike to his mental and physical continuity. This is called the “knowledge accompanied by strong dislike: (nibbida - ñāna).

When he meditates on the nature of his body and mind still more deeply, he feels anxious to get rid of his troublesome burden of mind-body continuity. This stage is called “ the knowledge accompanied by the desire for freedom” (muñcitukamyatā -ñāna).

While he still meditates over the changing nature of his phenomenal existence, he perceives that there is no reason to be troubled over it, as there is no ego or “I” to suffer from the horrors of this existence. He examines further and sees that the momentary rise and fall are inherent and unavoidable characteristics of all conditioned things, i.e., mental and physical states. This is called “ the knowledge of reflecting contemplation” (patisankhānupassanā - ñāna).

Now the meditator goes on meditating over the voidness of “I” in the conditioned states, both mental and physical,

and he feels neither worried nor delighted at whatever happens to the so-called body or mind, and he perceives all such things with indifference and equanimity. This experience is called “the knowledge which sees conditioned things with indifference” (**sankhārupekkhā - ñāna**). When he comes to this stage of perceiving the nature of conditioned things from his own experience, his attachment to existence in the world begins to be reduced. The three **signata** of all things in the world, namely impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and egolessness of all mind-body processes, become clearer and clearer before his mind’s eye. Introspection rises to a higher maturity. At this moment, two or three mind-units (thought moments) fixed on one of the three signata pass off, followed by a consciousness (mind-unit) which lets off the conditioned things which his mind (his ‘stream of mind-units’) had clung to up to this moment. This consciousness fixes itself on a new object, the unconditioned element, which hazily emerges. At the immediate next moment, a consciousness arises in him fixing itself on the clearly manifested **Nibbana** element.

As the clear vision of **Nibbana*** is manifested, all doubts about the path, the goal, and the path-expounder (Buddha) are instantly rooted out, together with the belief in an ego, and the regard for rituals and ceremonies is eradicated. This consciousness is called the “first path consciousness” - consciousness which has entered the path to perfect sainthood (arahantship) or the consciousness which has

* **Nibbana** (Pali) Nirvana (Sanskrit), .

entered the holy stream (**sotāpatti-magga-citta**). This consciousness is followed by two or three mind-units fixing themselves on the very same **Nibbāna**-object. This latter consciousness is called “the fruition- consciousness of stream entry” (**sotāpatti-phala citta**s).

If the meditator cannot attain to any higher stage of the path during this lifetime, he will return to this world (i. e., will be reborn here) seven times more. But if he strives hard, he may be able to attain to the once-returner’s stage (**sakadāgāmi** stage), attenuating the remaining passions and achieving the vision of **Nibbana** again. If he strives further, he may attain to the third holy stage, the stage of non-returner (**anāgāmi-bhumi**), eradicating sensual desire and ill-will. But even if he is not able to attain to the next higher stage in this very life, he will not be reborn here, but will be born in a higher, heavenly plane (**Brahma-loka**) called Holy Abode (**Suddhāvāsa**), and will attain to perfect sainthood (arahantship) there. But if he strives hard, and is successful in eradicating all the remaining passions and getting the full vision of **Nibbana**, he will attain to perfect sainthood (arahantship) here in this life itself. Thus he completes his holy pilgrimage.

Conclusion

One meditator, who has attained to the first or second trance, enters the trance, remains a short time experiencing it, and emerges from it. Then he contemplates and examines the joy (the prominent factor thereof), perceives its impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and egolessness, and

goes on developing his insight, completes his spiritual pilgrimage in the aforementioned way, and reaches its culmination by attaining to perfect sainthood.

Another meditator, who has attained to the third trance, enters the trance, remains in it for a short time, emerges from it and contemplates its prominent factor (the ease felt therein) the nature of the trance-consciousness and its object, and sees that all of them are impermanent, unsatisfactory and egoless. The meditator, developing his insight as mentioned before and completing the path, attains perfect sainthood (arahantship).

Still another meditator, who has attained to the fourth trance in which equanimity is the prominent factor, enters the trance, experiences it, emerges from it and reviews the nature of the trance, its factors and its object, and sees that they are all impermanent, unsatisfactory and egoless. Developing **vipassanā** (insight meditation), he completes the holy pilgrimage and attains to perfect sainthood.

Some meditators practise **vipassanā** (insight-development) from the beginning. They do not try to attain to ecstatic trances. They start with being mindful of inhalation and exhalation. Then, by counting breaths as mentioned before, they develop concentration and mindfulness. Next, they stop counting and develop mindfulness over extension of breaths both long and short, and then contemplate over the start, middle and end of inhalations and exhalations. They examine the feelings that arise at the breath's first touch on the tip of the nose or upper lip and see impermanence,

unsatisfactoriness and egolessness of feeling. Then they examine the consciousness (mind-unit), perception (**sañña**) and other mental factors (**sankhārā**) that arise together with the feeling and see that all of them are impermanent, and therefore not satisfactory, and insubstantial (egoless). In this way, they develop insight (**vipassanā**) and pass the stages: purity of view (**diṭṭhi - visuddhi**) purity by overcoming uncertainty (**kankhā-vitarana-visuddhi**), purity by discriminating between right and wrong paths (**maggāmagga-ñānadassana-visuddhi**), and nine stages of insight (**anupassanās**), or the purity of thoughts through the course of development of insight (**paṭipadā-ñānadassana-visuddhi**). When the seven factors of realization (**bojjhanga**) arise, they examine them and see impermanence even in them. Thus completing the practice, they attain to the holy stages - stream entry (**sotāpatti**), etc. - and finally attain to arahantship.

SIXTEEN POINTS OF ĀNĀPĀNA-SATI MEDITATION

(according to the **Ānāpāna-Sati Sutta** in **Majjhima - Nikāya**)

First Tetrad

1. He breathes in and out with attention.
2. He breathes in and out with attention to their length.
3. He breathes with awareness of the beginning, middle and end of both inhalation and exhalation.
4. While calming down his breathing, he breathes in and out.

Second Tetrad

1. He trains himself to experience joy in the first and second ecstatic trances.
2. He trains himself to experience ease in the first, second and third ecstatic trances, while breathing in and out.
3. He trains himself to experience and know feelings and perceptions while inhaling and exhaling (in all four trances).
4. He trains himself to breathe in and out while he calms down his inhalation and exhalation.

Third Tetrad

1. He trains himself to perceive the mind (in trance) while breathing in and out.
2. He trains himself to experience joy in the first, second and third trances while breathing in and out.
3. He trains himself to inhale and exhale while keeping his mind fixed on the counterpart object.
4. He trains himself to free his mind from hindrances at the access trance and the first trance, freeing his mind from applied and sustained thoughts at the second trance, freeing his mind from joy at the third trance, freeing his mind from ease (or pleasant feeling) at the fourth trance, and freeing his mind from passions while practising vipassana until he attains to arahantship.

Fourth Tetrad

1. He trains himself to contemplate impermanence while breathing in and out (even without attaining to trances).
2. He trains himself to perceive momentary breakdown of mental and physical state and at least to realize **Nibbāna**, while still breathing in and out.
3. He trains himself to see the breakdown of mental and physical states, and also of the passions, while breathing in and out.
4. He trains himself to abandon passions by the practice of **vipassanā** and perceiving Nibbana at the four holy stages.



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